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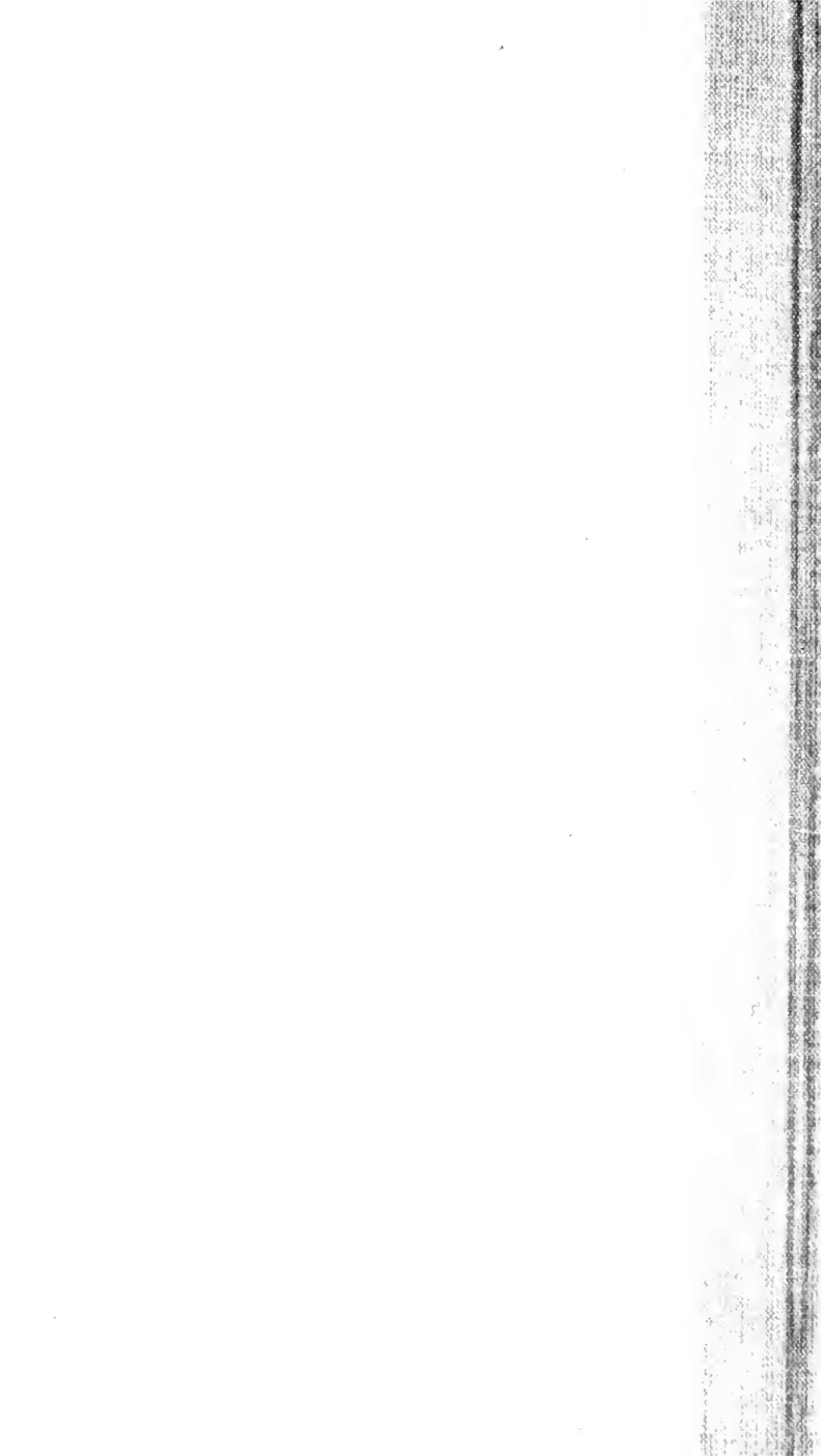
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A VOICE

FROM

REBEL PRISONS;

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE

HORRORS OF THE STOCKADES

AT ANDERSONVILLE, MILAN, AND OTHER PRISONS.

BY A

RETURNED PRISONER OF WAR.

Louis M. Dyer

1865.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF GEO. C. RAND & AVERY, 3 CORNHILL.
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VOICE FROM REBEL PRISONS.

ON the 20th of October, 1863, I enlisted in the 48th Regiment New-York Volunteers, and left on the 1st of November. Arrived at Beaufort on the 5th, and were stationed at Fort Pulaski for garrison duty, until ordered to Hilton Head, where we remained until sent to Florida as a part of General Gilmore's expedition. The land-force consisted of the 47th, 48th, 115th Regiments New-York Volunteers; 7th Regiment Connecticut Volunteers; 7th Regiment New-Hampshire Volunteers; 40th Massachusetts Mounted Infantry; two companies of the 1st Massachusetts Cavalry; one company 3d Rhode-Island Artillery; two companies United-States Artillery; and three United-States colored regiments, under command of Gen. Seymour.

Disembarking at Jacksonville, about the 10th of February, we fell into line, and marched towards the St. Mary's River to a place called Finegan's Camp, where we found a band of guerillas, which we broke up, capturing between twenty and thirty. We camped here that night, and, in the morning, resumed our march, as far as Baldwin, on the Florida Central Railroad, where we stopped two nights, and then went to Barbor's Plantation, on a branch of St. Mary's River.

In Florida and the southern part of Georgia, a tract of land of about ten miles, and containing a house, barn, and shed, is dignified by the name of town. As we passed through the country, we came upon such desolate-looking "towns" in every ten or fifteen miles. We stopped at Barbor's only half an hour; just long enough to cook our coffee and eat our hard tack, which generally constitutes a soldier's dinner while on the march. We then marched ten miles to "Sanderson," a town of the same style as Barbor's, where we stopped over night, and then had orders to fall back to Barbor's, where we remained two or three days, and were then ordered to take up our line of march to the front. We passed by Sanderson, the place we had previously left, and went eight miles beyond, where we met the enemy's skirmishers; and they, while striving to lead *our* skirmishers towards their intrenchments, before arriving at the breastworks, brought on a general engagement of our whole force, which continued about three hours, when a retreat was ordered; and our army fell

back to Jacksonville, leaving all, or mostly all, our dead and wounded on the field.

This was called the battle of Olustee, and, though unsuccessful, was one of the hardest-fought engagements of the war. Just before the order was given to retreat, I received a bullet through my ankle, which obliged me to remain on the field. I managed to crawl into a bush, where I could see the rebels come to our wounded, and take their money, watches, and whatever they found on their persons; while they stripped the dead altogether. The wounded negroes they bayoneted without mercy. Close beside me was a fine-looking negro, who was wounded in the leg: his name was Brown, an orderly sergeant in one of the companies of the 8th United-States Regiment. A rebel officer happened to see him, and says, "Ah, you black rascal, you will not remain here long!" and, dismounting from his horse, placed his revolver close to the negro's head, and blew his brains out.

We were left on the field that night, subjected to the insults of the enemy, who searched us, and took what they chose of clothing, arms, &c., and all the money they could find about us, and the next morning taken off in wagons and ambulances to a railroad station, five miles distant, where we were placed on corn-husks along the side of the road, where we waited for transportation, remaining there until the next afternoon. During that time, some of the wounded received a little attention; and some, whose limbs were badly shattered, suffered amputation, very roughly performed. Immediately after, and before recovering from the effects of chloroform, we were packed into the cars, which then came up. These were box-cars, and about half as large as those used North; and the men were packed, sick and wounded, forty in a car, like a drove of sheep, and were taken to Tallahassee, about three hundred miles, where we arrived in a famished condition. At every station, those who died were taken out and buried.

Whilst lying on the corn-husks, the rebel soldiers took every occasion to insult us. A man by the name of Bougle, major of the negro regiment, was severely wounded in the leg, and they seemed to delight in the torture they inflicted on him: telling him hanging was too good; that he ought to be buried alive, with one of his negroes beneath him, and one above him.

On arriving at Tallahassee, we were placed on wagons, and taken to several vacant buildings. About forty, myself included, were placed on some straw on the floor of the Odd-Fellows' Hall, which was connected with the Free-Masons' Hall; underneath which were two engine-houses, which were also used to receive the prisoners. The weather was very cold; yet the windows were all out, and we were left lying on the floor: some with fevers coming on; others with their

wounds in a very bad condition ; and still others who were raving in delirium. None of us had tasted food since our capture, three days before. That night, at nine o'clock, we had rations of corn-bread, boiled rice, and molasses ; but, as most of us had nothing to put the molasses in, we were obliged to go without : some few were fortunate enough to have tin cups, which they had carried with them off the field, and these we afterwards found to be invaluable. The doctor in charge ordered some of the prisoners, who were wounded slightly, to officiate as nurses for those of us who were unable to help ourselves ; but, aside from their care, we had no medical or surgical attendance, except that the doctor came to us every morning, and gave us a few drops of turpentine in a little water, which took the place of whiskey, as a stimulant. The surgeon said that it was unfortunate we had not arrived sooner, as he had had a set of surgical instruments ; but they were stolen a short time before. Therefore we were obliged to bathe and dress our wounds with cold water, which, with some, proved very effectual, — their wounds improving.

Two weeks after, a surgeon arrived from Charleston, and the other was removed. This new surgeon brought with him a case of old instruments, which enabled him to perform amputation, which was the only kind of surgical operation he was competent to perform : consequently many who needed bones set, and pieces extracted, were obliged to suffer ; and their bones knitting together wrongly, left the limbs in a misshapen condition : while all who had suffered amputation afterwards died, in consequence of arteries working loose, and want of care ; while, with proper treatment, they might have lived, and their limbs been retained.

When first taken there, we had the sympathies of some of the ladies of the town, and, on the second day of our imprisonment, were visited by some of them, who brought us little delicacies ; but, on the third day, the provost marshal issued orders that no one would be allowed inside the guard : and all communication was stopped, and orders given to those outside forbidding them to sell any thing to us, and we forbidden to buy. In a week after, we heard a rumor that we were to be searched, and our money taken from us, in order to effectually prevent our making any purchases ; although in our weak condition we could scarcely eat the rude fare we had for rations. And if we had only been allowed to buy a few necessaries, it would have kept us from nearly famishing. A few managed to secrete their money, knowing it would be invaluable whilst in prison ; but the most were deprived of all. Our rations consisted mostly of boiled pigs' heads, which we saw before cooking, putrid, sickening, loathsome ; and we thought we could not eat them : but hunger at length overcame our disgust, and we

were glad to get any thing, even if alive with maggots. We were usually served with two meals a day: the morning meal consisting of a handful of rice, and sometime before midnight we had our pigs' heads. We were not often in the mood for joking, but we used to say, we knew those were the heads of the pigs we had killed before our capture.

As soon as we were able to move about, we were furnished with a dozen pairs of crutches, which were used by all the prisoners. We were also given three or four tin pans, and the same number of tin kettles, and a few tin cups; and we would wait for one another, taking turns in using them. Every two weeks, the doctor went his rounds, and selected about fifteen or twenty of those whom he considered well enough, and sent them to Andersonville, although still in a very weak and critical condition. Their crutches were taken from them, and left behind for the use of those who remained. Therefore, they were obliged to reach the station as best they could: some crawling on hands and knees, utterly unable to walk; yet the surgeon pronounced them fully able to be sent off.

After being there three months, Dr. Mapp was removed, also Dr. Hollofield, surgeon in charge of Union prisoners there, and superseded by Dr. Giddings, surgeon in charge of the rebel hospital at that place, and who then had charge of ours, with Dr. Clark as assistant. They were both fine men and skilful surgeons. They treated us very kindly, dressed our wounds, set bones, and extracted pieces from many a shoulder, hand, and limb. They were very indignant at the manner in which we had been kept, and declared that hanging would be the just deserts of those who had had the care of us. A Mrs. Parker, formerly of New York, was matron of the rebel hospital; and hearing from the doctors in what condition we had been left, her sympathies being aroused, came in quite often, and nursed our men with great care, sometimes bringing us better food; so, for a while, we considered ourselves very comfortable. The men, as they continued to improve, were sent away once in two weeks, and those from the other temporary hospitals were brought in to take their places.

After we had been in Tallahassee five months, and under the care of these doctors two months, all were gone but forty, when Gov. Milton discovered we were being what he considered altogether too well treated, and ordered the rest of us, whether we were able or not, to be sent immediately to the stockade at Andersonville, where our companions had preceded us. Those who went last were allowed to take the crutches, cups, &c., with them. Those who had their money taken when they were searched were promised to receive it again when they should leave; but they never saw it after it was taken from them.

The prisoners were always accompanied to Andersonville by a very heavy guard, who, on their return, gave most terrible accounts of the horrors of the stockade whither we were going, so that we took leave of our late prison with foreboding hearts. Those who were sick and badly wounded were taken to the depot in wagons, and, despite their broken limbs, piled in so thick as to be unable to move. Those wounded in the arms and body were obliged to walk. We were guarded for the first two months by a company from a regiment of the Georgia artillery, and a company from a regiment of Georgia infantry. Afterwards they were sent to Virginia; and the State militia took their place as guard. This militia was composed mostly of boys of twelve and fourteen years of age, and old men of sixty and seventy. In Florida, at that time, every man had either volunteered or been conscripted. They were notified to appear before the rebel authorities at appointed times, and were given the choice of volunteering or of waiting for conscription. If a man volunteered immediately, he was placed in the State militia, or, as they are called among themselves, "New Issue," but were liable to be sent to any other part of the Confederacy. When a man does not wish to join the army until actually compelled, replies that he will wait until conscripted, he is then and there seized as a conscript, and sent at once to the front, or wherever the authorities see fit. These conscripts are of the most ignorant and miserable class, both ragged and dirty: the negroes themselves feel their superiority, and look upon them with contempt.

On reaching the railroad station, we were all packed into one box-car, some of the men being in a very suffering condition, having had surgical operations performed on them only a few days previous. We were taken to Quincy, a place twenty miles distant, and from there carried across the country in rough wagons, the weather being at that time suffocatingly warm. After jolting about for twenty miles, we reached a steamboat-landing on the Chattahoochee River, a desolate-looking place, with only one building in sight, and that used for storing cotton. A steamboat was already there awaiting our arrival, and we were immediately taken on board. We hoped for a comfortable passage the remainder of our journey, but were disappointed, as this boat was used for carrying freight, and the accommodations for passengers were miserable. On arriving at Fort Gaines, Georgia, we were taken in another box-car to Andersonville.

When the car at last stopped at the station, we saw, about an eighth of a mile before us, the stockade of which we heard so often from the guard at Tallahassee; and as we saw the thousands of little fires which were built all over the ground, with faint smoke arising, and the numberless small tents and mud-huts, and the swarms of men, which from

the station had the appearance of an infinity of bees, our hearts sank within us. Whilst lying in the dreary Odd-Fellows' Hall at Tallahassee, with wounds painful and neglected ; with sickness coming on ; with the dying moans of our comrades sounding continually in our ears ; without food, and treated with contempt by our rebel captors,—we could not imagine any thing more wretched ; but when this sight of the stockade stood before us, we would gladly have returned, and remained during the war, accepting our former treatment willingly. On our arrival, we were taken to headquarters close by, where our names were registered with the number of our company and regiment, then marched under guard to the places assigned us in the different detachments. These detachments were composed of two hundred and ninety men each, superintended by a sergeant, selected from among the men by themselves, for the purpose of drawing their rations from the quartermaster. Each detachment was divided into "messes :" some "messes" containing ten men, others twenty, each appointing itself a sergeant, called "sergeant of the mess ;" while the other was called "sergeant of the detachment." The duty of the "sergeant of the mess" was to draw rations from the "sergeant of the detachment," and issue them to each man.

When we found ourselves inside, we looked about to find a spot where we could lie down and rest ; for we were very tired, as well as hungry : but the ground was destitute of a blade of grass, a shrub or tree, and alive with maggots. We observed the little tents which had attracted our notice at the railroad-station, and found them to be the abodes of those men who were fortunate enough to own blankets, of which they were rudely constructed. Some lived in holes dug in the ground, others in mud-huts ; but the most had no habitation but the bare ground, with the heavens only for a covering. We looked eagerly around, hoping to find some of our comrades who had been previously taken from Tallahassee ; but not one appeared : and we afterward learned they had perished,—victims to the cruelties and horrors by which we were surrounded. The enclosure contained about thirty-five acres, ten acres of which was swamp, the whole enclosed by a sort of wall, made of the trunks of large pine-trees, with the branches stripped off, set into the ground close together. On the top of this wall were sentry-boxes ; and inside the wall, and about thirty feet from it, was a low railing called the "dead line," beyond which no one was allowed to pass, without being immediately shot by some of the sentries in the boxes. The railing was thus placed in order to prevent men from going close to the stockade, as by so doing they might dig tunnels, and make their escape ; or they might fasten one end of their blanket to the inside of the wall, and fasten the other to the ground,

and thus make a warmer enclosure than in any other manner: but it seemed as if nothing which would add a trifle of comfort to their misery was to be allowed in this horrible place.

After looking about and contemplating the life before us, we turned our attention to some of the thirty-five thousand men swarming all about, presenting the most pitiable and sickening spectacle we had ever beheld: some without any clothing, others with only shirt and drawers, and all presenting the appearance of walking skeletons. They seemed to know we were new-comers by our comparatively healthy looks and comfortable clothing, although we had considered ourselves very destitute before this. We were assured, however, that, in a short time, hunger and disease would assail us, and we would become as loathsome as they. We continued feeling very hungry, and wondered why we received no rations; but none arrived that day, and at night we found places on the ground which served as a bed, and some of us who had blankets rolled ourselves in them, and in spite of our misery, and the wretchedness surrounding us, fell asleep.

In the morning, a sickening sight met our eyes: close beside us, and all over the huge, uneven piece of ground, were lying the bodies of those who had died during the night, naked and ghastly, with the worms already consuming them; some were already awake, and striv- ing with great patience to collect fragments of wood with which to cook the expected rations. Most of these men were afflicted with scurvy, moved slowly and with much difficulty, as their limbs were so distorted they were compelled to walk on their toes, being unable to place their feet flat on the ground. Others were crawling towards the ditch, a muddy, slimy gutter, which ran through the stockade its entire length, receiving its accumulated filth, furnishing the water we drank, as well as for our bathing, the use of which producing most dreadful effects on wounds, already painful from neglect, and eaten away by gangrene. As the day advanced, and no rations had yet appeared, we made inquiries of our fellow-prisoners, and were told that the quartermaster was very irregular with the food, sometimes delaying it for days altogether.

On the afternoon of the second day, the wagons containing our pro- vision appeared through the gate, and hope revived in our hearts as we crowded eagerly round; and each received a gill of rice and a pint of meal, which we might cook as best we could. Wood was brought in, and distributed same as rations, and amounted to about the same quantity: just a few little sticks, five or six inches long, and one-half inch thick. This wood was barely sufficient to make enough fire to cook "mush," which was the way we ate our meal. Those men whose wounds were become nearly healed were detailed to go outside

on various errands ; and, while gone, collected all the pieces of wood which they could find, and brought in with them, which they sold to those of us who had money ; and those who had no money would give half a ration in exchange for wood enough to cook the other half. After rations had been served, could be heard various cries of " Who'll trade rice for meal ? " — " Who'll trade meal for wood ? " &c. Sometimes we had beans given us, which we could always readily sell. Soon we became thirsty, and set out in search of water ; for from the ditch we turned in disgust, the surface of which was covered with insects and floating filth. On wandering farther, we came upon a well, dug in the ground, but from which we were not allowed to draw, as it was too small to supply water for many ; being owned by a man who had smuggled a spade, and brought it in amongst an armful of wood. Shortly after, however, some of the detachments were furnished with spades ; so that many dug wells for themselves, although others still remained unprovided for, and were obliged to continue using water from the ditch. We also came upon holes dug in the ground as receptacles of filth, in which were thousands of maggots ; and, as there was only about five feet of land to each man, these holes were in close proximity on all sides.

Men were continually dying, — some of starvation, some of fevers, some of diarrhoea, and some became putrid from gangrene, which ate away parts of their bodies, usually their hands and feet, causing severest suffering to those afflicted, and adding to the horrible stench by which we were surrounded. Forty and fifty died thus every day, and were left on the ground until next day, when they were thrown into carts, and carried to the dead-house at one end of the enclosure ; from whence they were taken in a day or two afterwards, and thrown into trenches dug for the purpose.

We had remained there only a few weeks, before some of those who came last from Tallahassee grew sick, and many died ; more continually arriving from other parts of the Confederacy to occupy the places vacated by those who died. Others, just alive, were crawling about without a particle of clothing, with seury-sores eating into their mouths and legs : some with what are called " bed sores," but, in these cases, caused by lying on the ground. These would crawl into the swamps, and lie with worms eating their sores until dead, sometimes remaining there several days before taken away ; others, urged by despair, walked deliberately to the dead-line, and were instantly shot, preferring immediate death, rather than drag out their miserable existence amid such horrors.

But the rebels were not the only ones by whom our situation was aggravated. There were a set of raiders amongst ourselves, who spec-

ulated on the feeble and weak, robbing them in every possible way, and living on the distresses of their own causing. Complaint was made to Capt. Wortz, who had charge of the stockade; and he ordered all rations to be stopped until the guilty ones should be discovered. This, of course, made all use their energies to detect the thieves; and, after going without rations for three days, seven of the ringleaders were caught and delivered to the captain, who placed them outside, under guard, to remain until the day of trial, when they were conducted inside, tried, and condemned before a jury selected from among ourselves, and afterward hung,—the captain furnishing the wood with which to build the gallows. After that, we were not troubled with raiders. Our cooking and eating was done while men were moaning and dying within a few feet of us: but suffering had hardened our hearts, and deadened our sensibilities, so that we did not heed them; and we went on regardless of the sights and sounds around us, intent only on trying to make our own lot endurable. Some even watching the dying that we might become the possessors of their scanty clothing; and coveting the privilege of carrying out the dead, as by this means we could breathe fresh air, or perhaps add a few fagots to our diminished store of wood. Thus one after another died, new arrivals of prisoners filling up the detachments as death thinned them out. About a sixteenth of a mile from the stockade was the hospital-ground, covering three acres, enclosed with a board fence five feet high. This ground was arranged with streets and tents, like a regimental camp, with four divisions: each division containing a certain number of wards; each ward having a ward-master and steward, who detailed some of the men, who were best able, to act as nurses to the others. The doctor usually visited the stockade every day; and, on his arrival, was assailed by crowds: some crawling on hands and knees, begging him to help them; and those who were entirely helpless, and nearly dead, were ordered by him to be sent to the hospital, and were therefore thrown into wagons, and jolted inside the hospital-grounds, where they were unloaded, and placed on the ground, many being dead before they were removed from the wagons.

In July and August it was very sickly, and the hospital contained three thousand men, and more were constantly arriving from the stockade; and, as the tents were full, hundreds were obliged to lie outside until vacancies occurred, and were left without care for days together, the sun or rain, as the case might be, pouring on their faces: many dying in this condition before places were made vacant for them in the tents. The tents were entirely unfurnished; however sick the patient might be, was forced to lie on the bare ground, with no covering, unless he possessed a blanket of his own, as nothing of the kind

was furnished by the authorities there. Even within them the shelter was insufficient to keep out the rain, as they were merely "fly tents," and poor at that, often blowing over in a storm or gale of wind. Men were detailed to carry food, which consisted of boiled rice, to those lying outside. Those few having cups to dip it from the bucket received their rations: the many who had none were passed by, and perhaps before next day would be found dead, literally starved to death. No one dared offer another his cup or dipper, as each was afraid of receiving gangrene or scurvy, with which nearly every man was diseased; and, in order to save himself, was obliged to be selfish. Large blotches were often seen on the faces and bodies of the sick, which, at first sight, appeared to be sores, but were in reality *beds of lice and maggots, which fattened on the poor creatures who were unable to move.* As the weather grew hot, hundreds died of dropsy, scurvy, diarrhoea, and small-pox, all receiving the same diet and treatment. Those with scurvy seemed to suffer most, their mouths being filled with sores, which made it impossible for them to eat the coarse food, and, receiving nothing stimulating or nourishing, were allowed to famish. Their wounds also became filled with gangrene; and, as the doctor seldom had caustic or any thing to stop its progress, limbs were amputated at the rate of twenty and thirty per day, the patients often dying during the operation. One man had a limb taken off at the thigh; and it was beginning to heal, when the other was attacked with gangrene, and, unable to cure it, the surgeon cut the other off also: telling the sufferer that when he was again within Union lines he could get cork limbs, and become as good as new.

The duty of each steward was to give medicine when it was furnished by the doctor, but which was not often, as it was not provided; and the ward-masters were expected to keep the tents and streets clean, although no means were afforded for removing the accumulations of filth, which, of course, remained to fill the air with dreadful effluvia, which bred flies and insects, to add to the torture already unendurable. Nurses were detailed from the stockade to make the sick as comfortable as they could under the circumstances, issue their rations, &c.; but many was the call for "water," which has been unanswered, though the dying one could only gasp the word. If any refused to act as nurses, they were immediately sent back to the stockade.

A day or two after the capture of Atlanta, the officers at Andersonville received orders from the War Department of the Confederate States to remove all prisoners from that place, as it was feared that Gen. Sherman would soon be down towards Macon, and cut off all communication between there and Savannah, and thus prevent them

from removing us to any other part of the Confederacy. Therefore, one day the officers and surgeons came inside the stockade, telling us they had good news: that arrangements had been made with the Federal Government for our immediate exchange; and that orders had been received to send us North; and that the next morning our exchange would commence. With what joy these words filled many a fainting and despairing heart, may better be imagined than described; and all night long was heard the hum of voices talking of their long-looked-for deliverance, which they now thought was at hand. Early in the morning, cars appeared at the station, and the removal commenced, continuing for a month; thousands leaving on some days, and very few at others, as the trains were very irregular. Finally, all were gone but a few thousands, who, by this time, began to fear this was no exchange, but merely a ruse to deceive them, in order that they would willingly leave the stockade, and without making an effort to escape, which they would probably do, if told they were to be taken to a prison in some other part of the Confederacy. These last, however, finally left Andersonville with foreboding hearts; yet were glad to leave such a wretched place, even if sure of being taken to another, which they hoped might be more endurable, and which they *knew could not* be worse. Whilst on the journey, and only ten miles from Andersonville, the entire train was thrown off the track, caused by the misplacement of the switch, and ten of the guard killed, and several of the prisoners badly injured, where they remained until another train came up, and were taken back. Shortly after the stockade was vacated, accounts were seen in rebel newspapers,—which had been brought into the hospital by men detailed to dig trenches outside,—which read to the effect that a special exchange of twelve thousand sick and wounded prisoners was about to take place; and that the Federal and Confederate Commissioners of Exchange had met by flag-of-truce boats on the Savannah River, and preliminary steps toward this exchange had been taken.

A few days after these accounts were read, a rebel colonel visited the hospital, and requested the privilege of taking all Irishmen who were there outside the enclosure, as he had something special to say to them; therefore those who were able to walk fell into line, and were marched out under guard. On arriving outside, he introduced himself as colonel of a Tennessee regiment, called the "Tennessee Tigers," composed entirely of Irishmen; and if any of the men present had fought under Gen. Grant, in the Battle of the Wilderness, they probably had heard of his "Tigers;" and if any of Col. Mulligan's men were before him, they had surely heard of him, as Mulligan's men and his "Tigers" had fought hand to hand: and he had received orders

from the Secretary of War to recruit his regiment with Irish prisoners. He had been to Milan, Ga., Florence, S. C., and other prisons in the Confederacy, and some had joined him; and he would like to procure enough at Andersonville to fill his regiment, their pay and rations to commence immediately: also saying he had seen a notice in the papers, that a special exchange of twelve thousand prisoners was about to be effected; but it was useless for these to expect to be removed, as the order would doubtless be filled at Milan, Florence, and other prisons nearer Savannah, which was to be the depot of exchange. Scarcely had he finished speaking, when every man turned from him with contempt, saying "never would they join the Confederate army: they would rather starve in prison, and die and decay," and said he ought not to call himself an Irishman, and think that other Irishmen had no more principle than himself; and, if they caught him within Union lines, would have the Lynch law enforced for his benefit: therefore he went away without any recruits.

We found he was mistaken as regarded the exchange, as next morning the surgeons came in and took the names of six hundred, who were taken next day in wagons to the railroad-station, and put into box-cars, each car containing sixty men, all of whom were so emaciated and feeble as to be unable to climb into the cars, which were unprovided with steps; and the poor cripples and sick men were obliged to assist each other, making effort after effort before they succeeded, in many cases bruising their suffering bodies fearfully. About four hours were occupied in this way, when rations were issued to each man, consisting of a piece of corn bread about three inches square, and about an ounce of bacon, which was all we had until we reached Milan.

After travelling about ten hours, we reached Macon, where we stopped two hours, and there saw a number of long trains loaded with cotton, and also all along the road between Macon and Milan we passed large numbers of cars containing cotton, ready to be removed as soon as news came of the advance of Gen. Sherman towards Macon, which was daily expected. We arrived at Milan about eleven o'clock next day, and were taken in wagons to the stockade, about two miles distant, although, on leaving Andersonville, we had been told we were to be taken at once to Savannah, and there placed directly on board our own transports; but now we again became almost hopeless, fearing we should never return within our own lines. The officers at Milan told us, however, we should surely be exchanged; but as there was some difficulty between the Commissioners of Exchange, we were to stop there until all was satisfactorily arranged between them.

We were very hungry on our arrival, having eaten nothing since

leaving Andersonville the day before; but we received no rations at Milan until after we had been there one day and night, when we received a half pint of meal, a gill of rice, and about three ounces of fresh beef, which we instantly ate without cooking. We received the same rations each day, occasionally having sweet potatoes instead of meal. This stockade was similar to the one we had just left: the dead and dying were lying on the ground, skeletons striving to walk about, and *all* nearly famished. Whilst there the Catholic priests belonging to Milan were allowed to visit us, and came often, speaking to us of hope and courage, which were the only words of consolation we heard. Some who were detailed to work outside managed to smuggle newspapers, which they brought in with them; and on such occasions rumors spread over the ground that a paper was inside, and a crowd would gather around that they might hear if it gave any information concerning the exchange, catching at the least word which held out a possibility of hope.

Thus the weary days passed until the before-mentioned difficulty was settled, and about three thousand of us left Milan; but before the remainder could be removed, news came that Gen. Kilpatrick's cavalry was advancing towards Milan; and in order to retain the prisoners within the Confederacy, they were immediately taken to Charleston, Florence, and other prisons, where some of them were afterwards exchanged. Our removal commenced one morning at eight o'clock, continuing until about three in the afternoon. We were carried to the railroad-station in carts, where we waited an hour for the cars to arrive which were to take us away. Whilst waiting, a train from Savannah came up, loaded with rebels just released from Northern prisons, many of whom were dressed with clothing from Uncle Sam's wardrobe, and who presented a healthy appearance compared with our pitiable condition. *They spoke to us with compassion, and gave us tobacco and hard tack, with which they were bountifully supplied before leaving Union lines, and which we eagerly accepted to appease our hunger.*

Finally the cars arrived, mostly open cars, which had apparently been used for carrying cattle, and we were put in, sixty in each car; nearly every man of which was in a helpless condition, and many who were raving in the delirium of fever. After going a few miles we stopped, and waited *five hours* for a train to pass, *the rain pouring heavily all the time*; and we soon became soaked through and through, many having no clothing but a worn-out shirt and pants. Soon after midnight, the expected train came along; and we resumed our journey, arriving at Savannah by daylight, exhausted, faint, chilled, and stiff, our hands having the appearance of having been parboiled. On unloading, many who were taken out were found to be dead, having been

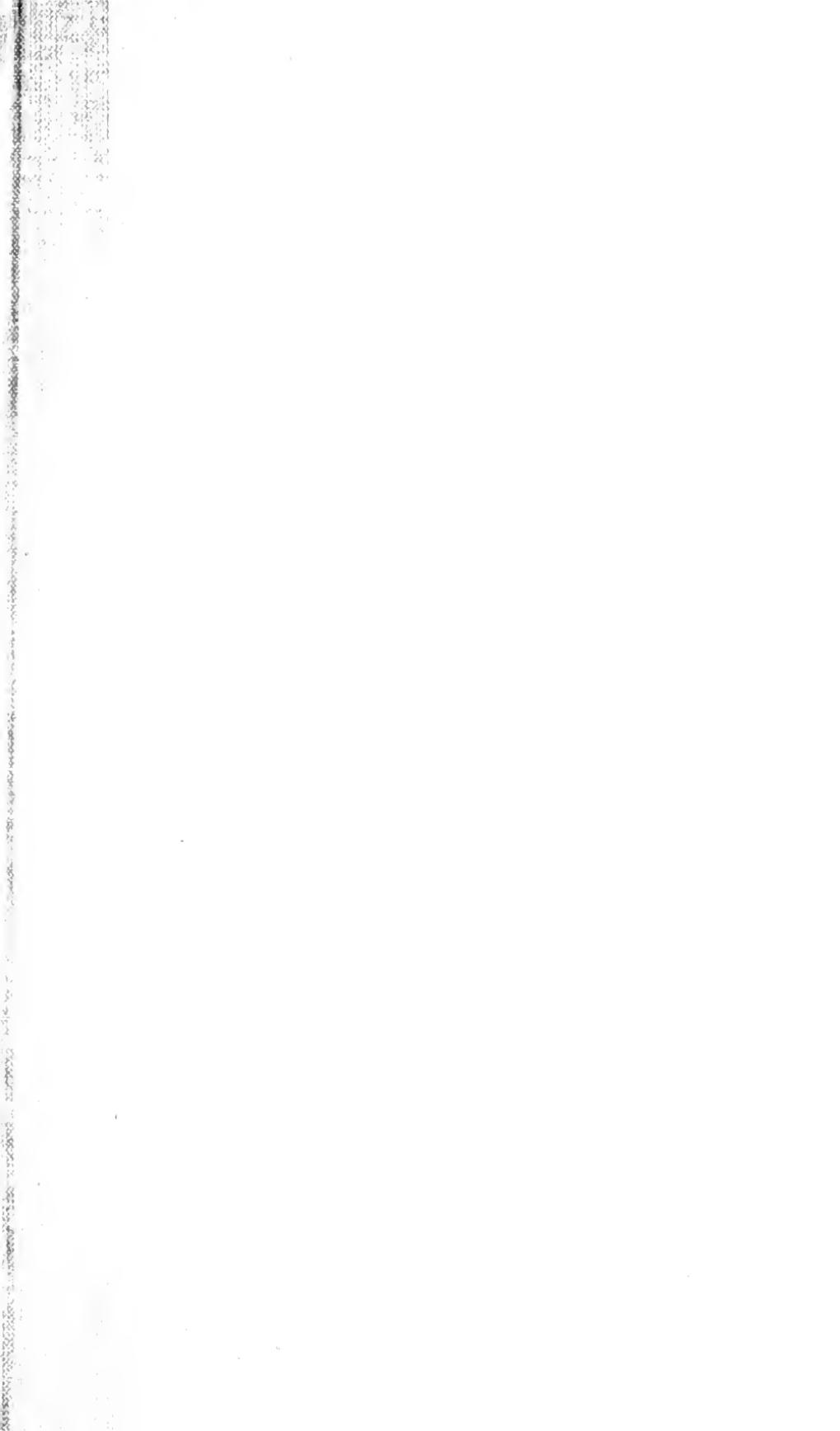
unable to survive this, the last day of their imprisonment. Wagons and ambulances were awaiting our arrival, in which we were taken to the steamboat-landing. Those not able to walk or even crawl were taken on board by means of stretchers carried by men who had been detailed to act as nurses. As we passed through the streets on our way to the boats, large numbers of ladies came running out of the houses, bringing us baked sweet potatoes, sliced meat, and biscuit, the taste of which we had not known since our imprisonment; also buckets of water, the sight of which was as refreshing as an oasis in a desert.

On arriving at the wharf, we were all put on board rebel boats, and sailed down the Savannah River about ten miles, when we came in sight of the Federal fleet, one of which, the "New York," came alongside; and we were transferred on board of her, where we remained about an hour, when the "G. Leary" steamed up alongside, and some four hundred of us were put on board, where we were served with supper, consisting of coffee, salt pork, and hard tack, which was the most luxurious repast many of us had had for a long time. We remained in the stream for three days, as we expected an arrival of other prisoners; but, they not arriving, we proceeded to Port Royal, where we were transferred to the "Baltie," and waited there for prisoners who were expected every day from Florence and Charleston. The railroads between those places and Savannah had been torn up.

But after waiting for them seven days they arrived, and three hundred of them taken aboard the "Baltie," where we had good accommodations, and many luxuries, such as pickles, preserved peaches, &c., furnished for us by the Sanitary Commission. On the fourth of December we arrived at Annapolis, about sixty having died on the passage. At Annapolis, we were taken to the hospital, which was in readiness to receive us. Much could be said of the kind treatment we here received: every one always on the alert to do all that was possible to alleviate the suffering; surgeons and physicians both skilful and efficient, &c., &c. But as every one is acquainted with the efforts of the Sanitary Commission, and many of our soldiers can testify to its success, nothing need be added here; and, as we are now returned to our own Northern homes, feel happy and thankful beyond expression that so many have survived the horrors of rebel prisons.







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